

Absalom and Achitophel. A POEM. 6

The Eight Edition.

THE KEY.

David, King Charles II. Absalom, D. Monmouth. Annabel, Dutchess of Monmouth. Achitophel, Earl of Shaftsbury, Zimri, L. Gray. Balaam, Sidney. Caleb, Armstrong. Nadab, Ferguson. Shimei, Sheriff Bethel. Corah, Stephen College. Bethsheba, D. Portsmouth, or any other Concubine.

N Pious Times e'er Priest-Craft did begin,
Before Polygamy was made a Sin;
When Man on many multiply'd his Kind,
E'er One to One was, curstly, confin'd:
Then Nature prompted, and no Law deny'd
The promiscuous Use of Concubine and Bride;
When Israel's Monarch; after Heavens own Heart,
His vigorous Warmth did, variously, impart
To Wives and Slaves; and, wide as his Command,
Scatter'd his Maker's Image through the Land.
Achah, of Royal Blood, the Crown did wear;
Soil ingrateful to the Tiller's Care:
Not so the rest; for several Mothers bore
To God-like David, several Sons before.
But since like Slaves his Bed they did ascend,
No true Succession could their Seed attend.
Of all this numerous Progeny was none
So beautiful, so brave as Absalom:
Whence, inspir'd by Diviner Lust,
His Father got him with a greater Gust;
So that his conscious Destiny made way,
By manly Beauty to Imperial Sway.
Early in foreign Fields he won Renown,
With Kings and States ally'd to Israel's Crown:
The Peace the thoughts of War he could remove,
And seem'd as he were only born for Love.
Where'er he did was done with so much Ease,
That him alone, 'twas natural to please:
His Motion's all accompany'd with Grace
And Paradise was open'd in his Face.
With secret Joy, indulgent David view'd
His youthful Image in his Son renew'd
To all his Wishes nothing be deny'd;
And made the charming Annabel his Bride.
What Faults he had (for who from Faults is free?)
His Fathers cou'd not, or he wou'd not see,
Some warm Excuses, which the Law forbore,
Were constru'd Youth that purg'd by boiling o're:
And Ammon's Murther, by a specious Name,
Was call'd a just Revenge for injur'd Fame.
Thus prais'd, and lov'd, the Noble Youth remain'd,
While David, undisturb'd, in Zion reign'd.
But Life can never be sincerely blest:
The Best of us the Best does prove the Best.
The Jews, a Headstrong, Moody, Mum'ring Race
As ever try'd th' Extent, and Stretch of Grace;
God's pamper'd People whom, debauch'd with Ease,
No King cou'd Govern, nor no God cou'd please;
Gods they had try'd of ev'ry Shape and Size,
That God-Smiths cou'd propuce, or Priests devise:

These Adam-wits, too fortunately free,
Began to dream they wanted Liberty:
And when no Rule, no President was found
Of Man, by Laws less circumscrib'd and bound;
They led their wild Desires to Woods and Caves;
And that all but Savages were Slaves.
They who, when Saul was Dead, without a Blow,
Made foolish Ishbosheth the Crown forego;
Who banish'd David did from Hebron bring,
And with a gen'ral Shout proclaim'd him King.
Those very Jews, who at their very best,
Their Humour more than Loyalty express'd,
Now, wonder'd why, so long, they had obey'd
An Idol-Monarch which their Hands had made:
Thought they might ruine him they cou'd create;
Or melt him to that Golden Calf, a State.
But these were random Bolts; no form'd Design,
Nor Int'rest made the Factions Croud to joyn:
The sober part of Israel, free from Stain,
Well knew the Value of a peaceful Reign:
And looking with a wise Affright,
Saw Seams of Wounds, dishonest to the Sight:
In Contemplation of whose ugly Scars,
They curst the Memory of the Civil Wars.
The Moderate sort of Men thus qualify'd,
Inclin'd the Ballance to the better Side:
And David's Mildness manag'd it so well,
The Bad found no Occasion to rebell
But, when no Sin, our byast Nature Leans,
The carefull Devil is still at hand with Means:
And providently Pimps for ill desires
The Good-Old-Cause reviv'd, a Plot requires.
Plots, true or false, are necessary Things,
To raise up Common-Wealths, and ruin Kings:
Th' Inhabitants of old Jerusalem
Were Jebusites: the Town so call'd from them;
But when the Chosen People grew more strong.
The rightful Cause at last became the Wrong:
And every Lois the Men of Jebus bore,
They still were thought God's Enemies the more;
Thus worn, and weaken'd, well or ill content,
Submit they must to David's Government:
Impoverish'd, and depriv'd of all Command,
Their Taxes doubled as they lost their Land;
And, what was harder yet to Flesh and Blood,
Their Gods disgrac'd, and burnt like common Wood.
This set the Heathen Priest-hood in a Flame;
For Priests of all Religion are the same:
Of whatsoe'er Descent their Godhead be,
Stoe, Stone, or homely Pedigree,

In his Defence his Servants are so bold;
 As if he had been born of beaten Gold.
 The Jewish Rabbins though their Enemies,
 In this conclude them honest Men and wise:
 For 'twas their Duty, all the Learned think,
 To espouse his Cause by whom they eat and Drink.
 From hence began that Plot, the Nations Curse,
 Bad in its self, but represented worse.
 Raise in Extreams, and in Extreams decry'd:
 With Oaths affirm'd, with dying Vows deny'd,
 Not weigh'd, or winnow'd by the Multitude;
 But swallow'd in the Mals, unchew'd and crude,
 Some Truth their was, but brew'd and dash'd with Lies
 To please the Fools and puzzle all the Wise.
 Succeeding Times did equal Folly call,
 Believing Nothing, or Believing all.
 Th' Egyptian Rites the *Jehusites* embrac'd;
 Where Gods were recommended by their Taste.
 Such sav'ry Deities must needs be good,
 As serv'd at once for Worship and for Food.
 By force they could not introduce these Gods;
 For Ten to One, in former Days was Odds.
 So Fraud was us'd, (the Sacrificers Trade,)
 Fools are more hard to conquer than persuade,
 Their busie Teachers mingled with the Jews;
 And rak'd, for Converts, even the Court and Stews:
 Which Hebrew Priests the more unkindly took,
 Because the Fleece accompanies the Flock,
 Some thought they God's anointed went to slay
 By Guns, invented since, full many a Day:
 Our Author swears it not, but who can know
 How far the *Jehusites* and Devil may go?
 This Plot, which fail'd for want of Common Sense,
 Had yet a deep and dangerous Consequence:
 For, as when raging Feavers boil the Blood,
 The standing Lake soon floats into a Flood;
 And ev'ry Hostile Humour, which before
 Slept quiet in its Channels, bubbles o'er:
 So sev'ral Factions from the first Ferment,
 Work up to Foam, and Threat the Government. [wise,
 Some by their Friends, more by themselves thought
 Oppos'd the Pow'r, to which they could not rise.
 Some had in Courts been great, and thrown from
 Like Friends, were harden'd in Impenitence. (thence,
 Some, by their Monarchs fatal Mercy grown,
 From pardon'd Rebels, Kinsmen to the Throne,
 Were rais'd in Pow'r and publick Office high;
 Strong Bands, if Bands ungrateful Men could tie,
 Of these the false *Achitophel* was first
 A Name to all succeeding Ages curst.
 For close Designs, and crooked Counsels fit;
 Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of Wit:
 Restless, unfixt in Principles and Place;
 In Pow'r unpleas'd, impatient of Disgrace.
 A fiery Soul, which working out its way,
 Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay:
 And o're inform'd the Tenement of Clay.
 A daring Pilot in Extremity;
 Pleas'd with the danger, when the waves were high.
 He sought the Storms; but for a Calm unfit,
 Wou'd steer too nigh the Sands, to boast his Wit.
 Great Wits are sure to Madneis near ally'd;
 And thin Partitions do there Bounds divide:
 Else, why shou'd he, with Wealth and Honour blest
 Refuse his Age the needful Hours of Rest?

Punish a Baby which he cou'd not please;
 Bankrupt of Life, yet Prodigal of Ease?
 And all to leave what with his Toil he won,
 To that unfeather'd, two Legg'd Thing, a Son:
 For, while his soul did huddled Notions try;
 And born a shapeless Lump, like Anarchy.
 In Friendship false, implacable in Hate:
 Resolv'd to ruin or to rule the State.
 To compass this, the Triple Bond he broke;
 The Pillars of the Publick Safety shook:
 And fir'd *Israel* for a Foreign Yoke.
 Then seiz'd with fear, yet still affecting Fame,
 Ulur'd a varriots all atoning Name.
 So easie still it proves in Factions Times,
 With publick Zeal to cancel private Crimes:
 How safe is Treason, and how sacred Ill,
 Were none can Sin against the People's Will:
 Where Crouds can wink; and no Offence be known
 Since in another's Guilt they find their own.
 Yet, Fame deserv'd, no Enemy can grudge:
 The Statesmen we Abhor, but praise the Judge.
 In *Israel*'s Courts ne'er sat an *Abbetbdin*
 With more discerning Eyes, or Hands more clean?
 Unbrib'd, unfought, the wretched to redress:
 Swift of dispatch, and easie of Access.
 Oh, had he been content to serve the Crown,
 With Virtues only proper to the Gown;
 Or, had the Ranknets of the Soil been freed
 From Cockle, that oppress the Noble Seed:
David for him his tuneful Harp had strung,
 And Heav'n had wanted one Immortal Song,
 But wild Ambition loves to slide, not stand;
 And Fortune's Ice prefer to Virtue's Land:
Achitophel, grown weary to possess
 A lawful Fame; and lazy Happines;
 Disdain'd the Golden Fruit to gather free,
 And lent the Croud his Arm to shake the Tree;
 Now, manifest of Crimes, contriv'd long since,
 He stood at bold Defiance with his Prince:
 He'd up the Buckler of the People's Cause,
 Against the Crown; and sculk'd behind the Laws,
 The wisht Occasion of the Plot he takes;
 Some Circumstances finds, but more he makes.
 By buzzing Emisaries fills the Ears
 Of listning Crouds, with Jealousies and Fears
 Of Arbitrary Counsels brought to light,
 And proves the King himself a *Jehusite*.
 Weak Arguments! which yet he knew full well,
 Were strong with People easie to rebel.
 For govern'd by the Moon, the giddy Jews
 Tread the same Track when she the Prime renews:
 And once in Twenty Years, their Scribes record,
 By natural Instinct they change their Lord.
Achitophel still wants a Chief, and none
 Was found so fit as Warlike *Abaslem*:
 Not, that he wisht his Greatness to create,
 (For Politicians neither love nor hate:
 But, for he knew, his Title not allow'd,
 Would keep him still depending on the Croud,
 That kingly Pow'r thus ebbing out, might be
 Drawn to the Dregs of a Democracy.
 Him he attempts, with studied Arts to please,
 And sheds his Venom in such Words as these.
 Auspicious Prince! at whose Nativity
 Some Royal Planet rul'd the Southern Sky;

Thy longing Country's Darling and Desire ;
 Their cloudy Pillar, and their Guardian Fire :
 Their second *Moses*, whose extended Wand
 Divides the Seas, and shews the promis'd Land :
 Whose dawning Day, in every distant Age,
 Has exercis'd the Sacred Prophets Rage :
 The Peoples Pray'r the glad Diviners Theam,
 The Young Mens Vision, and the Old Mans Dream !
 Thee, Saviour, Thee, the Nations Vows confess ;
 And, never satisfy'd with seeing, bless :
 Swift, unbespoken Poms, thy step proclaim.
 And stammering Babes are taught to lisp thy Name.
 How long wilt thou the general Joy detain ;
 Starve, and defraud the People of thy Reign ?
 Content ingloriously to pass thy Days
 Like one of Virtue's Fools that feeds on Praise ;
 Till thy fresh Glories, which now shine so bright,
 Grow stale, and tarnish without daily sight,
 Believe me, Royal Youth, thy Fruit must be,
 Or gather'd ripe, or rot upon the Tree.
 Heav'n, has to all allotted, soon or late,
 Some lucky Revolution of their Fate :
 Whose Motions, if we watch and guide with Skill,
 For human Good depends on human Will,
 Our Fortune rolls, as from a smooth Descent,
 And from the first Impression takes the Bent :
 But if unseiz'd, she glides away like Wind :
 And leaves repenting Folly far behind,
 Now, now she meets you, with a glorious Prize,
 And spreads her Locks before her, as she flies,
 Had thus old *David*, from whose Loyns you spring,
 Not dar'd, when fortune call'd him to be King,
 At *Gath* an Exile he might still remain ;
 And Heavens anginting Oyl had been in vain.
 Let his successful Youth your Hopes engage ;
 But shun th' Example of declining Age :
 Behold him setting in his Western Skies,
 The Shadows lengthning as the Vapours rise.
 He is not now, as when on *Jordan's* Sand
 The joyful People throng'd to see him Land,
 Covering the *Beach* and Blackning all the *Strand* :
 But, like the Prince of Angels from his height,
 Comes tumbling downward with diminish'd Light :
 Betray'd by one poor Plot to publick Scorn ;
 (Our only Blessing since his Curse Return :)
 Those Heaps of People which one Sheaf did bind,
 Blown of, and scatter'd by a Puff of Wind,
 What Strength can he to your Designs oppose,
 Naked of Friends, and round beset with Foes ?
 If *Pharaoh's* doubtful Succour he shou'd use,
 A Foreign Aid would more incense the *Jews* :
 Proud *Egypt* wou'd dissembled Friendship bring ;
 Foment the War, but not Support the King ;
 Nor wou'd the Royal Party e're Unire
 With *Pharaoh's* Arms, r' assist the *Jebusite* ;
 Or if they shou'd, their Int'rest soon wou'd break,
 And, with such odious Aid, make *David* weak,
 All sorts of Men, by my successful Arts,
 Abhorring Kings, estrange their alter'd Hearts
 From *David's* Rule ; and tis the gen'ral Cry.
 Religion, Common-wealth, and Liberty.
 If you, as Champion of the Publick Good,
 Add to their Arms a Chief of Royal Blood ;
 What may not *Israel* hope, and what Applause
 Might such a General gain by such a Cause ?

Nor barren Praise alone, that gawdy Flow'r,
 Fair ongly to the Sight, but solid Pow'r :
 And nobler in limited Command,
 Given by the Love of all your Native Land,
 Then a Successive Title, long, and dark,
 Drawn from the mouldy Rolls of *Noah's* Ark.
 What cannot Praise effect in mighty Minds,
 When Flattery sooths, and when Ambition blinds.
 Desire of Pow'r, on Earth a vicious Weed,
 Yet, sprung from high, is of Celestial Seed :
 In God 'tis Glory : and when Men aspire,
 'Tis but a Spark too much of heavenly Fire,
 Th' ambitious Youth, too coverous of Fame,
 Too full of Angels Metal in his Frame ;
 Unwarily was led from Virtue's Ways ;
 Made drink with Honour, and debauch'd with Praise,
 Half loath, and half consenting to the Ill,
 (For loyal Blood with in him struggled still)
 He thus reply'd — And what Pretence have I
 To take up Arms for publick Liberty ?
 My Father governs with unquestion'd Right ;
 The Faith's Defender, and Mankind's Delight :
 Good, Gracious Just, observant of the Laws ;
 And Heav'n by Wonders has espous'd his Cause,
 Whom has he wrong'd in all his peaceful Reign ?
 Who sues for Justice, to his Throne in vain ?
 What Millions has he pardon'd of his Foes,
 Whom just Revenge did to his Wrath expose ?
 Mild, Easie, Humble, Studious of our Good ;
 Inclined to Mercy, and averse from Blood.
 If Mildness ill with stubborn *Israel* Suit,
 His Crime is God's beloved Attribute,
 What cou'd he gain, his People to Betray
 Or change his Right for Arbitrary Sway ?
 Let haughty *Pharaoh* curse with such a Reign,
 His fruitful *Nile*, and yoke a servile Train.
 Why then should I, encouraging the Bad,
 Turn Rebel and run popularly Mad ?
 What more can I expect, while *David* lives ?
 All but his kingly Diadem he gives :
 And that, but there he paus'd ; then fighting, said,
 Is surely destin'd for another Head.
 I find, I find, my mounting Spirits bold,
 And *David's* Part disdains my Mother's Mold.
 Why am I scant'd by a Niggard Birth ?
 My Soul disclaims the Kindred of her Earth :
 And made for Empire, whispers me within :
 Desire of Greatness is a God-like Sin.
 Him staggering so when Hell's dice Agent found,
 While fainting Virtue scarce maintain'd her Ground,
 He pours fresh Forces in, and thus replies ;
 Th' Eternal God supremely Good and wise
 Imparts not these prodigious Gifts in vain ;
 What Wonders are reserv'd to bless your Reign ?
 Against your Will your Arguments have shown,
 Such Virtue's only giv'n to guide a Throne.
 Not that your Father's Mildness I condemn ;
 But manly Force becomes a Diadem.
 'Tis true, he grants the People all they crave ;
 And more perhaps than Subjects ought to have :
 For Lavish Grants suppose a Monarch tame.
 And more his Goodness than his Wit proclaim,
 But when shou'd People strive their Bonds to break,
 If not when Kings are negligent and weak ?
 Let him give on till he can give no more,
 The thirsty *Sanhedrin* shall keep him poor : Am

And ev'ry Sheckle which he can receive,
 Shall cost a Limb of his Prerogative
 To ply him with new Plots, shall be my care;
 Or plunge him deep in some Expensive War;
 Which, when his Treasure can no more supply,
 He must, with the remains of Kingship, buy,
 His faithful Friends, our Jealousies and Fears,
 Call *Jebusites*; and *Pharaoh's* Pensioners:
 Whom, when your Fury from his Aid has torn,
 He shall be naked left to publick Scorn.
 The next Successor, whom I fear and hate
 My Arts have made obnoxious to the State;
 Turn'd all his Vertues to his Overthrow,
 And gain'd our Elders to pronounce a Foe.
 His Right for Sums of necessary Gold:
 Shall first be Pawn'd, and afterwards be Sold:
 Till Time shall ever-wanting *David* draw,
 To pass your doubtful Title into Law:
 If not, the People have a Right suprem
 To make their Kings; for Kings are made for them,
 All Empire is no more than Pow'r in Trust.
 Which when resum'd, can be no longer just,
 Succession, for the General Good design'd,
 In its own Wrong a Nation cannot bind:
 If alt'ring that, the People can relieve,
 Better one suffer than a Nation grieve,
 The *Jews* we'll know their Pow'r; e'er *Saul* they chose,
 God was their King, and God they durst Depose,
 Urge now your Piety, your filial Name,
 A Father's Right, and fear of future Fame;
 The publick Good, that universal Call,
 To which even Heav'n submitted, answers all,
 Nor let his Love enchant your generous Mind;
 'Tis Nature's Trick to propagate her Kind
 Our fond begetters, who wou'd never die,
 Love but themselves in their Posterity.
 Or let his Kindness by th' Effects be try'd,
 Or let him lay his vain Pretence aside.
 God said, he lov'd your Father; cou'd he bring
 A better Proof, than to anoint him King?
 It surely shew'd he lov'd the Shepherd well;
 Who gave so fair a Flock as *Israel*,
 Wou'd *David* have you thought his Darling Son?
 What means he then to alienate the Crown?
 The Name of godly he may blush to bear;
 'Tis after God's own Heart to cheat his Heir,
 He to his Brother gives suprem Command;
 To you a Legacy of Barren Land:
 Perhaps th' old Harp, on which he thrums his Lays
 Or some dull *Hebrew* Ballad in your praise.
 Then the next Heir, a Prince Severe and Wise,
 Already looks on you with jealous Eyes;
 Sees thro' the thin Disguises of your Arts,
 And marks your Progress in the peoples Hearts.
 Tho' now his Mighty Soul its Grief contains;
 He meditates Revenge who least complains,
 And like a Lion slumbering in the Way.
 Or Sleep dissembling, while he waits his Prey.
 His fearless Foes within his Distance draws;
 Constrains his roaring, and contracts his Paws:
 Till at the last, his Time for Fury found,
 He shoots with sudden Vengeance from the Ground.
 The prostrate Vulgar, passes o're, and spares;
 But with a lordly Rage, his Hunters tears.
 Your Case no tame Expedients will afford;
 Resolve on Death, or Conquest by the Sword.

Which for no less a Stake than Life you draw;
 And Self-Defence is Nature's eldest Law,
 Leave the warring People no consid'ring Time;
 For then Rebellion may be thought a Crime.
 Prevail your self of what Occasion gives,
 But try your Title while your Father lives:
 And that your Arms may have a fair Pretence,
 Proclaim, you take them in the King's Defence;
 Whose sacred Life each Minute wou'd Expose.
 To Plots, from seeming Friends, and secret Foes,
 And who can sound the Depth of *David's* Soul?
 Perhaps his Fear, his Kindness may controul.
 He fears his Brother, tho' he loves his Son,
 For plighted Vows too late to be undone.
 If so, by Force he wishes to be gain'd;
 Like *Womens* Leachery, to seem constrain'd:
 Doubt not; but when he most affects the Crown,
 Commit a pleasing Rape upon the Crown.
 Secure his Person, to secure your Cause;
 They who possess the Prince, possess the Laws.
 He said, And this Advice above the rest,
 With *Abalom's* mild Nature suited best:
 Unblam'd of Life, (Ambition set aside)
 Not stain'd with Cruelty, nor puffed with Pride.
 How happy had he been, if Destiny
 Had higher plac'd his Birth, or not so high!
 His kingly Virtues might have claim'd a Throne;
 And blest all other Countries but his own:
 But charming Greatness, since so few refuse;
 'Tis juster to lament him, than accuse.
 Strong were his Hopes a Rival to remove,
 With Blanishments to gain the publick Love;
 To head the Faction while their Zeal be hot,
 And popularly prosecute the Plot.
 To further this, *Achitophel* unites
 The Malecontents of all the *Israelites*;
 Whose differing Parties he could likewise joyn,
 For several Ends, to serve the same Design.
 The best, and of the Princes some were such,
 Who thought the Pow'r of Monarchy too much:
 Mistaken Men, and Patriots in their Hearts:
 Not Wicked, but seduc'd by impious Arts.
 By these the Springs of Property were bent
 And wound so high, they crackt the Government,
 The next for Int'rest fought t' embroil the State,
 To sell their duty at a dearer Rate;
 And make their Jewish Markers of the Throne,
 Pretending publick Good, to serve their own.
 Others thought Kings an useless heavy Load,
 Who cost too much, and did too little Good.
 These were for laying honest *David* by;
 On Principles of pure good Husbandry.
 With them joyn'd all th' Harangues of the Throng,
 That thought to get Preferment by the Tongue.
 Who follow next, a double Danger bring,
 Not only hating *David*, but the King;
 The *Soymean* Rour, well vers'd of old,
 In godly Faction, and in Treason bold:
 Cowring and quaking at a Conqueror's Sword,
 But lofty to a lawful Prince restand;
 Saw with Disdain an *Ethnick* Plot begun,
 And scorn'd by *Jebusites* to be out done.
 Hot-headed *Levites* too, who pull'd before
 From th' Ark, which in the Judges Days they bore,
 Resum'd their Cant, and with zealous Cry,
 Pursu'd their old belov'd Theocracy;

Where *Sanhedrin* and Priest enslav'd the Nation,
 And justify'd their Spoils by Inspiration.
 For who so fit for Reign as *Aaron's* Race
 If once Dominion they could find in Grace?
 These led the Pack; tho' not of surest Scent,
 Yet deepest mouth'd against the Government.
 A numerous Host of dreaming Saints succeed;
 Of the true old Enthusiastick Breed:
 'Gainst Form and Order they their Power employ;
 Nothing to build, and all Things to destroy.
 But far more numerous was the Herd of such,
 Who Think too little, and who Talk too much.
 These out of meer Instinct, they knew not why,
 Ador'd their Father's God, and Property:
 And, by the same blind Benefit of Fate,
 The Devil and the *Jeboisite* did hate:
 Born to be sav'd, ev'n in their own Despight;
 Because they could not help believing right.
 Such were the Tools; but a whole *Hydra* more
 Remains, of sprouting Heads, too long to score.
 Some of their Chiefs were Princes of the Land;
 In the first Rank of these did *Zimri* stand,
 A Man so various that he seem'd to be
 Not one, but all Mankind's Epitomy.
 Stiff in Opinions, always in the Wrong;
 Was ev'ry thing by Starts; and nothing long;
 But in the Course of one revolving Moon,
 Was Chymist, Fidler, Statesman, and Buffoon:
 Then all for Women, Painting, Rhiming, Drinking;
 Besides ten thousand Freaks that dy'd in thinking.
 Blest Madmen, who could ev'ry Hour employ
 With something new to wish, or to enjoy?
 Railing and Praising were his usual Theams;
 And both (to shew their Judgment) in Extrems:
 So over Violent, or over Civil,
 That every Man with him, was God or Devil.
 In squandering Wealth was his peculiar Art;
 Nothing went unrewarded but Desert.
 Beggar'd by Fools, whom still he found too late:
 He had his Jest, and they had his Estate.
 He laugh'd himself from Court; then sought Relief
 By forming Parties, but cou'd ne'er be Chief:
 For spite of him, the Weight of Business fell
 On *Abisalom* and wife *Achitophel*:
 Thus, wicked but in Wills, of Means bereft,
 He left not Faction, but of that was left.
 Titles and Names 'twere tedious to rehearse
 Of Lords, below the Dignity of Verse.
 Wits, Warriors, Common-wealths Men, were the best:
 Kind Husbands, and milder Nobles all the rest.
 And therefore in the Name of Dulness, be
 The well-hung *Balaam* and cold *Caleb* free.
 And canting *Nadab* let Oblivion damn,
 Who made new Porridge for the Paschal Lamb.
 Let Friendship's Holy Band some Names assure:
 Some their own Worth, and some let Scorn secure.
 Nor shall the Rascal Rabble here have Place,
 Whom Kings no Titles gave, nor God no Grace:
 Not Bull-faces *Jonas*, who cou'd Statutes draw
 To wean Rebellion, and make Treason Law.
 But he, tho' bad, is follow'd by a worse,
 The Wretch, who Heaven's Ambint dar'd to Curse.
Shimei, whose Youth did early Promise bring
 Of Zeal to God, and Hatred to his King;
 Did wilely from expensive Sins refrain,
 And never broke the Sabbath, but for Gain.

Nor never was he known an Oath vent,
 Or Curse, unless against the Government,
 Thus heaping Wealth by the most roay Way
 Among the *Jews*, which was to Cheat and Pray.
 The City to reward his Pious Hare
 Against his Master, chose him Magistrate:
 His Hand a Vane of Justice did uphold,
 His Neck was loaded with a Chain of Gold.
 During his Office, Treason was no Crime,
 The Sons of *Belial* had a glorious Time:
 For *Shimei*, tho' Prodigal of Peif,
 Yet lov'd his wicked Neighbour as himself:
 When two or three were gathered to declaim
 Against the Monarch of *Jerusalem*,
Shimei was always in the midst of them,
 And if they curs'd the King when he was by,
 Wou'd rather Curse then break good Company.
 If any durst his Factious Friends accuse.
 He packt a Jury of Dissenting *Jews*,
 Whose fellow-feeling in the godly Cause,
 Wou'd free the suffering Saint from Human Laws:
 For Laws are only made to punish those
 Who serves the King and to protect his Foes.
 If any leisure Time he had from Power,
 (Because 'tis Sin to mis-employ an Hour;)
 His Business was, by writing to persuade,
 That Kings were Useless, and a Clog to Trade:
 And that his noble Stile he might refine,
 No *Rachabite* more shunn'd the Fumes of Wine.
 Chast were his Cellars; and his Shrieval Board
 The Grossness of a City Feast Abhor'd;
 His Cooks with long Disuse, their Trade forgot,
 Cool was his Kitchen, tho' his Brains were Hot.
 Such frugal Virtue, Malice may accuse;
 But sure 'twas necessary to the *Jews*:
 For Towns once burnt, such Magistrates require
 As dare not tempt God's Providence by Fire.
 With spiritual Food he fed his Servants well,
 But free from Flesh, that made the *Jews* rebel:
 And *Moses's* Laws he held in more account,
 For forty Days of Fasting in the Mount.
 To speak the rest, who better are forgot,
 Wou'd tire a well-breath'd Witness of the Plot:
 Yet *Corah*, thou shalt from Oblivion pais;
 Erect thy self thou Monumental Brats:
 High as the Serpent of thy Metal made;
 While Nations stand secure beneath thy Shade.
 What tho his Birth were base, yet Comets rise
 From earthly Vapours ere they shine in Skies.
 Prodigious Actions may as well be done
 By Weaver's Issue as by Prince's Son.
 This Arch-Attestor for the Publick Good,
 By that one Deed Enables all his Blood.
 Who ever ask the Witnesses high Race,
 Whose Oath with Martyrdom did Stephen grace?
 Ours was a Levite, and as Times went then
 His Tribe were God Almighty's Gentlemen.
 Sunk were his Eyes, his Voice was hoarse and loud,
 Sure Signs he neither Cholerick was, nor proud:
 His long Chin prov'd his Wit; his Saint-like Graces
 A Church Vermilion, and a *Moses's* Face,
 His Memory, miraculously great,
 Cou'd Plots, exceeding Man's Belief, repeat;
 Which, therefore cannot be accounted Lies,
 For humane Wit cou'd never such devise.

Some fustian is mingled in his Book;
 But, where a Witness said, the Prophet spoke:
 Some Things like visionary Sights appear;
 The Spirit ceit him up, the Lords knows where:
 And gave his Rabbinical Degree,
 Unknown to foreign University.
 His Judgment yet his Memory did excel;
 Which pierce his wondrous Evidence so well;
 And suited the Temper of the Times;
 Then groaning under Jebusitic Crimes,
 Let Israel's best suspect his Heavenly Call,
 And rashly judge his Writ Apocryphal;
 Our Laws for such Offences have Forfeits made;
 He takes his life, who takes away his Trade.
 Were I my self in Witness Corah's Place,
 The Wretch who did me such a dire Disgrace,
 Should whet my Memory, tho' once forgot,
 To make him an Appendix of my Plot.
 His Zeal to heav'n, made him his Prince dispise,
 And load his Person with Indignities:
 But Zeal peculiar Privilege affords;
 Indulging Latitude to Deeds and Words,
 And Corah might for Agag's Murder Call
 In Terms as curse as Samuel us'd to Saul.
 What others in his Evidence did joyn,
 (The best that could be had for Love or Coyne,)
 In Corah's own Predicament will fall;
 For Witness is a common Name to all.
 Surrounded thus with Friends of every Sort,
 Deluded Absalom forsakes the Court:
 Impatient of high Hopes, urg'd with Renown,
 And fix'd with near Possession of a Crown;
 Th' admiring Crowd are dazzled with surprize,
 And on his goodly Person feed their Eyes:
 His Joy conceal'd, he sets himself to Show;
 On each side bowing popularly low.
 His Looks, his Gestures, and his Words he frames,
 And with familiar Ease repeats their Names;
 Thus form'd by Nature, furnish'd out with Arts,
 Vides unselt into their secret Hearts.
 With a kind compassionating Look,
 And sighs, bespeaking Pity ere he spoke:
 Few Words he said; but easy those and fit:
 Love slow than Hybla drops, and far more sweet.
 I mourn, my Country-men, your last Estate;
 Not far unable to prevent your Fate:
 Behold a banish'd Man, for your dear Cause
 Expos'd a Prey to arbitrary Laws!
 Yet ah! that I alone could be undone,
 Cut off from Empire, and no more a Son!
 Now all your Liberties a Spoil are made;
 Egypt and Tyrus intercept your Trade,
 And Jebusites their Sacred Rites invade.
 My Father, whom with Reverence yet I name,
 Charm'd into Ease, is careless of his Fame;
 And brib'd with petty Sums of Foreign Gold,
 Is grown to Ben-Ami's Embraces old;
 Exalts his Enemies, his Friends he hates;
 And all his Pow'r against himself employs,
 He gives, and let him give my Right away:
 But why should he be his own, and yours betray?
 He, only he, can make the Nation bleed,
 And he alone from my Revenge is freed,
 Take then my Tears, (with that he wip'd his Eyes)
 'Tis all the Aid my present Pow'r supplies:

No Court-Informer can these Arms accuse;
 These Arms may Sons against their Fathers use;
 And, 'tis my Wish, the next Successor's Reign
 May make no other Israelite complain.
 Youth, Beauty, Graceful Action, seldom fail;
 But common Interest always will prevail;
 And Pity never ceases to be shown
 To him, who makes the Peoples Wrongs his own.
 The Crowd, (that still believe their Kings oppress)
 With lifted Hands their young Messiah bless:
 Who now begins his Progress to ordain,
 With Chariots, Horsemen, and a numerous Train:
 From East to West his Glories he displays;
 And, like the Sun, the Promis'd Land surveys.
 Fame runs before him, as the Morning-Star;
 And Shouts of Joy salute him from afar:
 Each House receives him as a Guardian-God;
 And consecrates the Place of his Abode:
 But hospitable Treats did most commend
 Wise Isachar his wealthy Western Friend.
 This moving Court, that caught the Peoples Eyes,
 And seem'd but pomp, and other Ends disguise:
 Achitophel had form'd it with intent
 To sound the Depths, and farham where it went,
 The Peoples Hearts; distinguish Friends from Foes;
 And try their Strength before they came to blows,
 Yet all was colour'd with a smooth pretence
 Of specious Love, and Duty to their Prince.
 Religion and Redress of Grievances,
 Two names that always cheat and always please;
 Are often urg'd; and good King David's Life
 Endanger'd by a brother and a Wife.
 Thus in a Pageant-Shew, a Plot is made,
 And Peace it self is War in Masquerade.
 Oh Foolish Israel! never warn'd by Ill:
 Still the same Bait, and circumvented still!
 Did ever Man forsake their present Ease,
 In midst of Health imagine a Disease;
 Take pains contingent Mischiefs to foresee,
 Make Hairs for Monarchs, and for God decree?
 What shall we think! Can People give away
 Both for themselves and Sons, the native sway?
 Then they are left defenceless, to the Sword
 Of each unbounded arbitrary Lord:
 And Laws are vain by which we Right enjoy,
 If Kings unquestion'd can these Laws destroy,
 Yet, if the Crowd be Judge of Fit and just,
 And Kings are only Officers in Trust,
 Then this resuming Covenant was declar'd
 When Kings are made, or is for ever bar'd;
 If those who gave the Scepter would not tie
 By their own Deed their own Posterity,
 How then could Adam bind his future Race?
 How could his Forfeit on Mankind take place?
 Or how could heavenly Justice damn us all.
 Who n'er consented to our Fathers Fall?
 Then Kings are Slaves to those whom they command,
 And Tenants to their Peoples Pleasure and
 And that the Pow'r for Property allow'd,
 Is Mischievously seated in the Crowd:
 For who can be secure of private Right,
 If Sovereign sway may be dissolv'd by Might?
 No is the Peoples Judgment always true:
 The most may err as grossly as the few.

And faultless Kings run down, by common Cry,
 For Vice, Oppression, and for Tyranny.
 What Standard is there in a fickle Rout,
 Which flowing to the Mark, runs faster out?
 Not only Crowds but Sanhedrins may be
 Infected with this publick Lunacy:
 And share the Madness of Rebellious Times,
 To Murder Monarchs for Imagin'd Crimes
 If they may give and take when e're they please,
 Not Kings alone (the Godhead's) Images,
 But Government it self at length will fall
 To Nature's State, where all have right to all.
 Grant our Lords the People Kings can make,
 What prudent Man a settled Throne wou'd shake?
 For whatsoe'er their sufferings were before,
 That Change they covet makes them suffer more.
 All other Errors but disturb a State:
 Innovation is the Blow of Fate.
 Antient Fabricks nod, and threat to fall,
 Patch the Flaws, and Buttress up the Wall,
 Thus far 'tis Duty; but here fix the Mark;
 For all beyond it is to touch the Ark.
 Exchange Foundations, cast the Frame anew,
 Work for Rebels, who base Ends pursue:
 Licence Divine and Humane Laws controul;
 And mend the Parts by ruine of the whole.
 The Tam'ring World is subject to this Curse,
 Physick their Decease into a worse.
 Now what Religion can Righteous David bring?
 Or fatal 'tis to be too good a King!
 Friends he has few, so high the Madness grows;
 To dare be such, must be the Peoples Foes:
 Some there were, ev'n in the worst of Days;
 Some let me Name, and naming is to Praise.
 In this short File Barzillai first appears;
 Barzillai crown'd with Honour and with Years:
 Since the Rising Rebels he withstood
 Regions Wast beyond the Jordan's Flood:
 Fortunately brave to buoy the State:
 Sinking underneath his Master's Fate:
 Exile with his God-like Prince he mourn'd;
 With him he suffer'd, and with him return'd.
 Court he practic'd, nor the Courtier's Art:
 Age was his Wealth, but larger was his Heart:
 Rich, well the noblest Objects knew to chuse,
 Fighting Warrior, and recording Muse.
 Bed cou'd once a fruitful Issue boast:
 No more than half a Father's Name is lost.
 Eldest Hope, with ev'ry Grace adorn'd,
 (So Heav'n will have it) always mourn'd,
 Always honour'd, snatch'd in Manhood's Prime
 Unequal Fates, and Providences Crime:
 Not before the Goat of Honour won,
 Parts fulfill'd of Subject and of Son;
 It was the Race, but short the Time to run.
 Narrow Circle, bar of Pow'r divine,
 Cut in Space, but perfect in thy Line!
 Command, by Law, thy matchless Worth was known,
 And War, was all thy own.
 Force, in and fainting Trians prop'd.
 Mighty haroah sound his Fortune stop'd.
 Great Honour, on unconquer'd Hand,
 Foes unpunish'd never cou'd withstand!
 He was unworthy of thy Name:
 The Date of all immoderate Fame.

It looks as Heaven our Ruine had design'd,
 And durst not trust thy Fortune and thy Mind.
 How, free from Earth, thy disencumber'd Soul
 Mounts up, and leaves behind the Cluds and starr Pole:
 From thence thy Kindred Legions may'st thou bring.
 To aid the Guardian Angel of thy King.
 Here stop my Muse, here cease thy painful Flight;
 No Pinions can pursue Immortal Height:
 Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more,
 And tell thy Soul she shou'd have fled before:
 Or fled she with his Life, and left this Verse
 To hang on her departed Patron's Herse?
 Now take thy sleepy Flight from Heav'n, and see
 If thou canst find on Earth another He;
 Another He wou'd be too hard to find,
 See then whom thou canst see not far behind.
 Zadoc the Priest, whom, sounding Pow'r and Place,
 His lowly Mind advanc'd to David's Grace;
 With him the Sagan of Jerusalem,
 Of Hospitable Soul, and Noble Stem
 Him of the Western Dome, whose weighty Sense
 Flows in fit Words and heavenly Eluquence.
 The Prophets Sons by such Examples led,
 To Learning and to Loyalty were bred:
 For Colleges on bounteous Kings depend,
 And never Rebel was to Arts a Friend.
 To these succeed the Pillars of the Laws,
 Who best cou'd Plead; and best can Judge a Cause.
 Next them a Train of Loyal Peers ascend,
 Sharp judging Adriel, the Mates Friend,
 Himself a Mule: — In Sanhedrins debate
 True to his Prince; but not a Slave of State.
 Whom David's Love his Honours did adorn,
 That from his disobedient Son were torn.
 Jothan of piercing Wit and pregnant Thought:
 Endew'd by Learning, and by Nature taught
 To move Assemblies, who but only cry'd
 The worle a-while, then chose the better side;
 Nor chose alone, but turn'd the Ballance too;
 So much the Weight of one brave Man can do.
 Hushai the Friend of David in Distress,
 In publick Storms of manly Stedfastness:
 By foreign Treaties he inform'd his Youth;
 And joy'd Experience to his Native Truth.
 His frugal Care supply'd the wanting Throne;
 Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own.
 'Tis easie Conduct when Exchequers flow;
 But hard the Task to manage well the low;
 For Sovereign Pow'r is too deprest or high,
 When Kings are forc'd to sell, or Crowds to buy.
 Indulge one Labour more, my weary Muse,
 For Amiel; who can Amiel's Praise refuse?
 Of antient Race by Birth, but nobler yet
 In his own Worth, and without Title great:
 The Sanhedrim long time as Chief he rul'd,
 Their Reason girded, and their Passion cool'd,
 So dextrous was he in the Crowd's Defence
 So form'd to speak a Loyal Nation's Sense,
 That as their Band was Israel's Tribes in small,
 So he was he to represent them all.
 Now rather Charioteers the Sear ascend,
 Whole loose Carriers his steady Skill commend:
 They, like th' unequal Ruler of the Day,
 Misguide the Seasons and mistake the Day,

While he withdrawn, at their mad Labour smiles,
And safe enjoys the Sabbath of his Toils.

These were the chief; a small but faithful Band }
Of Worthies, in the Breach who dares to stand,
And Tempt th' united Fury of the Land;
With Grief they view'd such powerful Engines bent
To batter down the lawful Government.
A numerous Faction with pretended Frights,
In Sanhedrins to plume the Regal Rights.
The true Successor from the Court remov'd:
The Plot, by Hireling Witnesses improv'd.
These Ills they saw, and as their Duty bound,
They shew'd the King the Danger of the Wound:
That no Concessions from the Throne wou'd please;
But Lenitives fomented the Discale:
That *Abalom* ambitious of the Crown,
Was made the Lure to draw the People down;
That false *Achitophel's* pernicious Hate.
Had turn'd the Plot to ruin Church and State;
The Council violent, the Rabble worse;
That *Shimei* taught *Jerusalem* to curse.

With all these Loads of Injuries oppress'd,
And long revolving in his careful Breast,
Th' Event of Things, at last, his Patience tir'd,
Thus from his Royal Throne, by Heav'n inspir'd,
The God-like *David* spoke, with awful Fear
His Train their Maker in their Master hear.
Thus long have I by notive Mercy sway'd,
My Wrongs dissimbled, my Revenge delay'd:
So willing to forgive th' offending Age,
So much the Father did the King assuage.
But now so far my Clemency they slight:
Th' Offenders question my forgiving Right
That One was made for Many, they contend,
But 'tis to Rule, for that's a Monarch's End.
They call my Tenderness of Blood, my Fear,
Tho' Manly Tempers can the longest bear,
Yet since they will divert my native Course,
'Tis time to shew I am nor good by Force:
These heap'd Affronts that haughty Subjects bring,
Are Burthens for a Camel, not a King:
Kings are the publick Pillars of the State,
Born to sustain and prop the Nation's Weight:
Many Young *Samsoun* will pretend a Call
To shake the Column, let him share the Fall:
But, Oh, that yet he wou'd repent and live!
How easie 'tis for Parent to forgive.
With how few Tears a Pardon might be won
From Nature, pleading for a Darling Son!
Poor pried Youth, by my paternal Care,
Rais'd up to all the Height his Frame cou'd bear:
Had God ordain'd his Fate for Empire born,
He wou'd have giv'n his Soul another Turn:
Gull'd with a Patriot's Name, whose moderen Sense
Is one that wou'd by Law supplant his Prince:

The Peoples *Brave*, the Politicians Tool,
Never was Patriot yet, but was a Fool.
Whence comes it that Religion and the Laws
Shou'd more be *Abalom's* than *David's* Cause?
His old Instructor, e'er he lost his Place,
Was never thought indu'd with so much Grace;
Good Heav'ns, how Faction can a Patriot Paint!
My Rebel ever proves my Peoples Saint:
Wou'd they impose an Heir upon the Throne?
Let *Sanhedrins* be taught to give their own.
A King's at least a part of Government,
And mine as requisite as their Consent:
Without my leave a future King to choose,
Infers a Right the present to depose,
True, they petition me t' approve their Choice,
But *Esaus* Hands suit ill with *Jacob's* Voice.
My pious Subjects for my safety Pray,
Which to secure they take my Pow'r away.
From Plots and Treasons Heav'n preserve my Years,
But save me most from my Petitioners.
Unsatiate as the barren Womb or Grave,
God cannot grant so much as they can crave,
What then is left but with a jealous Eye
To guard the small Remains of Loyalty?
The Law shall still direct my peaceful Sway,
And the same Law teach Rebels to obey:
No groundless Clamours shall my Friends remove:
Nor Crouds have Pow'r to punish ere they prove:
For Gods, and God-like Kings their Care express,
Still to defend their Servants in Distress.
Oh that my Pow'r to saving were confin'd:
Why am I forc'd, like Heav'n against my Mind,
To make Examples of another Kind?
Must I at Length the Sword of Justice draw
Oh curst Effects of necessary Law!
How ill my Fear they by my Mercy scan,
Beware the Fury of a patient Man.
Law they require, let Law then shew her Face,
They cou'd not be content to look on Grace,
Her hinder Parts, but with a daring Eye
To tempt the Terror of her Front, and Die.
Their Belial with their Belzebub will fight,
Thus on my Foes, my Foes shall do me right:
Nor doubt th' Event, for factious Crouds engage
In their first Onset, all their brutal Rage,
Then let me take an unresisted Course:
Retire and trawise, and delude their Force:
But when they stand all Breathless, urge the Fight,
And rise upon 'em with redoubled Might:
For lawful Pow'r is still superiour found,
When long driv'n back, at length it stands the Ground,
He said. Th' Almighty, nodding, gave Consent,
And Peals of Thunder shook the Firmament.
Henceforth a Series of new Time began,
The mighty Years in long Procession ran:
Once more the God-like *David* was restor'd,
And willing Nations knew their lawful Lord.

F I N I S.

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